

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Sense of Senate Resolution (SSR) Number:
Date of Senate Approval:

APC Sense of the Senate Resolution 4:

Sense of the Senate Resolution Modification to Fall 2020 Grading Policy

Whereas

We thank our UNC Asheville Student Government Association for their thoughtful and respectful [recommendations to our Provost concerning our Fall 2020 Grading Policy](#); and

Whereas

We thank our UNC Asheville Provost for consulting our thoughts regarding the reflections and requests of our students regarding the Fall 2020 Grading Policy; and

Whereas

The UNC Asheville Student Government Association urged the implementation of a grading policy that allows the student to select the pass/fail option for at most two courses in which the student is enrolled. The SGA further requested that students be allowed to select this option two weeks after grades have been posted; and

Whereas

We, like our students, recognize the unexpected stresses and challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 abruptly disrupted our students' class schedules, suspended many of our students' co-curricular activities, and morphed graduation celebrations into virtual shadows of the usual congratulatory expressions. With compassion and empathy we recognize that some are experiencing direct battles with COVID-19 either in terms of their own health or in terms of the health and safety of relatives and friends. Some are risking their own health by working in jobs in service to the broader community; and

Whereas

We agree with our UNC Asheville Student Government Association that the tension of our contentious election further stresses our community, especially our students. We also agree that COVID-19, the elections, and the current civil unrest all highlight the injustices and inequities in terms of racial identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Since the beginning of the fall semester, we have recognized and continue to recognize that each of these stressors--COVID-19,

the election, the civil unrest surrounding ongoing social injustice--affect each individual student differently; and

Whereas

In preparing for the Fall semester our faculty, in concern for our students and in consideration of these difficult and challenging times, deliberately and intentionally incorporated into their pedagogy strategies to help with student success in meeting each course's outcomes. Some strategies have included offering dual options of online and face-to-face learning within the same course, flexible attendance policies, flexible assignment deadlines, take-home exams, and exam-replacement. Faculty have designated grades with these accommodations in mind; and

Whereas

Changing the grading policy two weeks prior to the last day of classes will produce concerns about the integrity of the grading. The proposed policy recommended by the SGA will cause confusion that may be detrimental to our students who apply to graduate school or who apply to jobs that require transcripts versus self-reported GPAs; and

Whereas

We have further concerns about detrimental transcript evaluations by entities external to the UNC System including but not limited to accreditation agencies and foundations that offer grants, scholarships and fellowships;

Therefore be it resolved that

1. We recommend extending the withdrawal period through the last day of classes, November 16th, and allow students up to two course withdrawals in this extended period. If a withdrawal from all courses is needed, the student may petition in accordance with the [Hardship Withdrawal policy](#).
2. We recommend that our colleagues, academic advisers and course instructors work with individual students to carefully and reflectively examine options such as grades of Incompletes (if a student has been active in the course), course repeats for grade replacement, and late withdrawals as these options may have complex implications depending on the individual student.

3. In concurrence with the UNC System designation, these withdrawals will not count towards the withdrawal limit of three (3) courses.
4. We stress that this document is exclusive to the Fall 2020 semester.